



**National Trust *for*  
Historic Preservation**  
*Save the past. Enrich the future.*"

***Portsmouth Advocates***

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# Form

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## *Site Information*

### **Site Name\***

Name of Site.

Creek Farm

### **Street Address\***

400 Little Harbor Road

### **City\***

Portsmouth

### **State\***

NH

### **Zip\***

03820

### **Current Property Owner\***

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

### **Property Owner\***

Is the property owner aware of the 11 Most listing? Would the owner be supportive of an 11 Most listing?

The property owner is not yet aware of the listing, but will be notified. They will not likely be supportive.

## *Nomination*

### **Significance\***

Why is the site historically significant? Does it have any historic designations or eligibility (local landmark, National Register, etc.)? What is the site's importance to the community? What are the specific reasons this place would be of interest to the public or media?

Eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the Arthur Astor Carey summer house or "Creek Farm" was designed by noted architect Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow for Arthur Astor Carey. Built beginning in 1887, the house is an outstanding example of the summer home movement in New Hampshire, and a rare survivor of the artistic summer colony at Little Harbor.

Arthur Astor Carey was a leader in New England's cultural and artistic life in the late 19th & early 20th centuries. Together with his Harvard classmate, John Templeman Coolidge III, who owned the nearby Wentworth-Coolidge estate, the two cultivated a summer colony of intellectual and artistic Boston elite. "The Little Harbor Community" included prominent writers, artists, architects, and historians. Carey's interest in music led to the addition of a Music Room in 1892. Decorated with rich oak paneling, exposed beams, murals, and a stone fireplace, the room served as a grand performance space.

Creek Farm is now thought to have national significance for its association with the 1905 Treaty of Portsmouth, which ended the Russo-Japanese War. The Russian and Japanese diplomats were informally entertained at Creek Farm during negotiations, an example of "Citizen Diplomacy," for which the state of NH provides annual recognition on Sept. 5. The Katsura tree, gifted by the Japanese delegation, still grows near the house. Of all the NH sites related to the Treaty negotiations, Creek Farm is the most intact.

### **Threat\***

Describe the nature of the threat and potential solutions to the threat. How urgent is the threat? What steps have already been taken to protect the site, and by whom? What individuals/organizations are involved, both in support and opposition? What is the timeline for decisions affecting the site? Who are the decision-makers?

Since acquiring the property in 2000 the Forest Society has made it clear that their mission at this location is not preservation of the significant house, but is focused on land conservation alone. The Forest Society has recently announced their plan to demolish the building. Located outside of the local historic district, there are no local protections beyond an up to 90-day demolition delay to facilitate discussion between the owner and the demolition opponents. The application for a demolition permit is expected in within weeks. Ultimately, the only decision-maker will be the Forest Society and their Board of Trustees.

The threat of demolition at the site has loomed since the Forest Society acquired the property. When demolition of the house was first proposed in 2000, preservationists from across New Hampshire and members of the local community, led by the Portsmouth Advocates, rallied together to identify an alternative reuse for the building that would be compatible with the conservation goals. A Boston University graduate school course entitled "Problems in Preservation" focused on the challenge and identified several potential reuse options. Following the completion of the former owner's life tenancy, a compatible tenant was identified in 2006. The partnership to save the house was lauded, and for what would be a decade, the resource was safe. The tenant provided notice of their intent to vacate the property in 2014 and finally left the site in 2017. Since that time, the building has been primarily vacant. Attempts by the Forest Society to find a suitable new tenant have been limited and bound by onerous requirements.

Portsmouth Advocates is again taking the lead to thwart demolition of this historic resource. A working committee has been established to coordinate with local media

outlets, including the Portsmouth Herald, to combat the decision and continue the reuse discussions. Local and State politicians have also been engaged and will be vocal in advocating for preservation of this resource.

### **Advocacy Solutions\***

What organizations will take the lead in advocating to save this place? Do these organizations have the capacity to lead this effort? Is there a clear solution or alternative that would preserve the site? What are the specific advocacy steps or action items that the public could take to help protect the site? What role would the 11 Most listing play in resolving the threat and/or promoting the solution?

Portsmouth Advocates, the historic preservation advocacy arm of the Portsmouth Historical Society is leading the charge to save Creek Farm. Established in 1980 Portsmouth Advocates has demonstrated success in protecting historic resources and educating the public about the values of historic preservation. Comprised of a dedicated team of preservationists, architects, museum professionals, and attorneys, this all-volunteer group is part of the non-profit Portsmouth Historical Society that provides public relations and marketing support.

Advocates is working to help the public understand how they can influence the process, from opposing the demolition permit through the City's Demolition Delay Ordinance, to providing comments directly to the Forest Society, engaging elected officials, and spreading the word to identify reuse options.

The preservation community in New Hampshire, including the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, the Division of Historical Resources, and the Japan-America Society of New Hampshire are all working together to encourage the Forest Society to expand their search for a suitable new use.

Ultimately, listing in the "11 Most" would heighten the profile of Creek Farm and provide a platform to widen the search for a suitable reuse. The additional media attention would assist in encouraging the Forest Society to consider alternatives by validating that the building is indeed significant, and worthy of preservation. Furthermore, the listing would better position the building to compete for future grant funding, providing a potential financial incentive to reutilize the nationally significant resource.

### **Media Potential\***

Identify the key issues associated with the site, its threat, or solutions that are potentially newsworthy. Who are the organizations that would effectively promote and utilize the 11 Most listing with a media plan? Do these organizations have the capacity to effectively promote the 11 Most listing?

Portsmouth Advocates has established a strategic communications plan that involves traditional media, social media, and targeted e-blasts. By providing access to experts and tailoring the release of information to maximize its use, we will keep this topic in the news. As demonstrated by previous efforts to promote the 1922 Memorial Bridge (2008 "11 Most") which attracted media attention from across the US for nearly a year after receiving the designation, we have the capacity to effectively promote the listing.

Working with our partners in this effort, we have assembled a team with a great deal of experience lobbying and promoting the value of historic preservation.

This proposal is uniquely suited to media attention because it brings with it the following:

1. Portsmouth prides itself on historic preservation, yet is experiencing substantial growth and gentrification. With a Master Plan goal to “Protect and Enhance the Integrity of Historic Landmarks and Cherished Views and Open Spaces,” it lacks many protections for the same. Many of the late 19th century grand summer houses which surrounded Creek Farm have been lost in favor of modern waterfront McMansions. This building is one of the few within publicly accessible open space.
2. Past preservation successes. The 2001 Portsmouth Advocates forum created a successful partnership between the Forest Society and a tenant.
3. Promoting the compatibility of land conservation and historic preservation.

## *Photo Uploads*

Please upload up at least two photos of your project below. Both historic and high quality contemporary images will be accepted. Photos must include at least one overall view of the property or resource that is the focus of your nomination. Most images should be in a horizontal format.

Select the highest dpi or pixel range possible—the bigger your image file, the better. We are looking for image files sizes 2 MB or larger. These will be used for digital and print reproductions so it is critical to provide the highest quality and largest images. Acceptable file types include JPEG or TIF. Word documents with images embedded are not acceptable. Original photo files must be submitted.

**PLEASE NOTE: WE RECOMMEND YOU SAVE A DRAFT OF YOUR APPLICATION BEFORE YOU UPLOAD PHOTOS.** Click the "save as draft" button at the bottom of this page to save.

### **Photo One\***

Please upload a photograph and then submit the following information for this photograph in the box below: Photo description, date, credit/photographer.

IMG\_6564.JPG

Oblique View of Creek Farm showing the Italian Garden and shingle-style house within its lush landscape.

Photographer: Kerry Vautrot, June 3, 2018

### **Photo Two\***

Please upload a photograph and then submit the following information for this photograph in the box below: Photo description, date, credit/photographer.

IMG\_6592.JPG

Oblique View of Creek Farm showing the house and the shore of the Piscataqua River

Photographer: Kerry Vautrot, June 3, 2018

### Photo Three

Please upload a photograph and then submit the following information for this photograph in the box below: Photo description, date, credit/photographer.

IMG\_6687.JPG

View of the Creek Farm courtyard with the Katsura Tree pictured at the right. The tree was a gift from the Japanese delegation participating in the 1905 Treaty of Portsmouth. Photographer: Kerry Vautrot, June 3, 2018

### Photo Four

Please upload a photograph and then submit the following information for this photograph in the box below: Photo description, date, credit/photographer.

### Certification

By entering in their name below, the nominator gives the National Trust for Historic Preservation the absolute and unqualified right to use in whole or in part, in whatever manner the National Trust may desire, including (but not limited to) use for publicity, audio-visual presentation, and/or promotion, all photographs, video, and other materials submitted as part of this nomination, and certifies that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of their knowledge.

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4. You represent and warrant that: a. you are the sole owner of, or otherwise have the authority to grant, all rights herein granted to the National Trust; and b. work(s) submitted does not infringe upon any copyright, trademark, or other proprietary right, violate any right of privacy, or contain libelous, scandalous, or unlawful material.

### Name\*

Kerry Vautrot

### Title\*

Chair, Portsmouth Advocates

## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- IMG\_6564.JPG
- IMG\_6592.JPG
- IMG\_6687.JPG







